

## **Claims**

1. A method of authenticating, via an authentication service, the contents of an document sent by an originator to at least one addressee, said method including the steps of:
  - (a) sending, via e-mail, said e-document to said addressee;
  - (b) sending, via e-mail, a copy of said e-document to said authentication service;
  - (c) encrypting said copy of said e-document;
  - (d) sending, via e-mail, said encrypted e-document to said addressee; and
  - (e) sending, via e-mail, said encrypted e-document to said originator.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein during the steps of encrypting and sending by said authentication service, no copy of said e-document or said encrypted e-document is retained by said authentication service.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein during the steps of encrypting and sending by said authentication service, no information on said e-document or said encrypted e-document is retained by said authentication service.
4. The method of claim 1, further including the step of saving said encrypted e-document by one or more of said originator and said addressee.

5. The method of claim 4, further including the steps of:
  - (a) sending, via e-mail, said encrypted e-document to said authentication service;
  - (b) decrypting said encrypted e-document by said authentication service; and
  - (c) sending, via e-mail, said decrypted document to said originator and said addressee.
6. The method of claim 5, further including the step of, prior to said decrypting, determining whether said encrypted e-document as received by said authentication service has been modified, and decrypting only said encrypted e-document if it has not been modified.
7. The method of claim 6, further including the step of notifying said originator and said address that said encrypted e-document as received by said authentication service has been modified and cannot be decrypted.